

P. africanus came, not from Egypt, but from the island of St. Thomas, in the Gulf of Guinea, where there occurs a form of weasel indistinguishable from the above type. The name *africanus* will therefore be most naturally applied to the weasel of St. Thomas and to a similar form of which Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant recently procured a specimen at Terceira, in the Azores, leaving the name *subpalmatus*, Hemprich and Ehrenberg, the exact allocation of which has long been uncertain, for the weasels (formerly known as *P. africanus*) of Egypt and Malta. The true *africanus* is now shown to be a far larger and stronger animal than *P. n. subpalmatus*, and it possesses a far more distinct caudal "pencil" of dark brown hairs. It has a wavy line of demarcation, and the much restricted white colour of the under surface is strongly washed with deep "buff-yellow." The dimensions of the Azorean specimen reach, for the animal measured in the flesh, head and body 266, tail 116, hind foot 44, and ear 18 mm.; and for the skull, greatest length 49, basal length 45.5, greatest breadth at zygoma 28, and palatal length 21 mm. It was caught in a rat-trap, which had been set for a buzzard.

The occurrence of a weasel on the Azores must be regarded as a fact of considerable interest from the point of view of the student of geographical distribution, still more so as the animal is quite distinct from any known form inhabiting Europe or the adjacent portions of Africa. That a similar and undistinguishable weasel should be found on the remote Island of St. Thomas is somewhat surprising, but it seems a plausible hypothesis that the latter stock may have been derived by introduction from the former.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

Report on the Sea Fisheries and Fishing Industries of the Thames Estuary. Prepared by Dr. JAMES MURIE. London: 1903.

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THIS report reflects great credit on the enthusiastic naturalist who, almost unaided, has accumulated in its pages an extraordinary mass of original and well-arranged information. Much has been done of late years for the improvement of the scientific aspect of our sea fisheries, but the Thames estuary had been entirely neglected.

After introducing his readers to the physical formation of the Thames estuary and to the history of Leigh-on-Sea, the fishing-station where his observations have been made, the author deals successively with the various members of the fauna which are in some way or other of commercial importance—Seals and Cetaceans.

Food-fishes, Oysters, Mussels and other Molluscs, Shrimps, Lobsters, and Crabs, all receiving due notice from both the life-history and economical points of view. Some of these subjects are treated with a profusion of details, much of which is entirely original, which raises Dr. Murie's contribution to a high scientific level. The compilation of a vast amount of scattered information respecting rare occurrences will prove a great boon to workers on the distribution of fishes on our coasts—a subject on which much remains to be done.

The chapter dealing with the Herring family (*Clupeidæ*) is a most important piece of work, and the contribution therein on Whitebait adds greatly to our knowledge of a question which has been frequently discussed before and since Dr. Günther settled the question by ascertaining the Whitebait of the Thames to consist mainly of young herrings. Dr. Murie has taken great pains to ascertain the nature of the mixed series of small fish &c. which are sent collectively to the market under this commonly known appellation, and he has added 20 to the 11 species which had already been listed by Frank Buckland in 1879.

In dealing with the Weavers (*Trachinus*), so notoriously dreaded by whitebaiters and shrimpers for their poisonous stings, the author contributes a useful footnote recommending the best treatment in case of accident.

Among the more remarkable fishes mentioned in the report, *Aphia pellucida*, the White Goby, deserves special attention. It was supposed to be rare in the district, but Dr. Murie finds it astonishingly numerous, especially in March and April. According to Prof. Collett, who has made a special study of this curious fish in the Christiania Fjord, the adults die after breeding, and therefore accomplish their life in the course of a year. Dr. Murie throws doubt on this conclusion, for reasons which, however, are reserved for a later communication.

In concluding this brief notice, we congratulate the Kent and Essex Fisheries Committee on having had the good fortune of bringing out a little book which will render such signal service, and we look forward to the publication of further instalments of the series of Reports of which the first is now before us.

PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

November 18th, 1903.—Sir Archibald Geikie, D.C.L., D.Sc., F.R.S., Vice-President, in the Chair.

The following communications were read:—

1. 'Notes on some Upper Jurassic Ammonites, with special reference to Specimens in the University Museum, Oxford.' By Miss Maud Healey.

In the course of re-arranging the Upper Jurassic fossils in the